UNITED
NATIONS

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Secretariat

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INFORMATION CIRCULAR

To: Members of the staff at Headquarters

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY EXAMINATIONS

1. The next language proficiency examinations in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish will be held on 28 and 29 May 1996. These examinations are open to:

(a) Students who have completed the highest level of a United Nations language course;

(b) Staff members who have not enrolled in a United Nations language course but who can show evidence that they possess, in the language to be tested, a level of knowledge equivalent to that of students who have completed the relevant United Nations language course.

Non-staff members who have not completed the highest level of a United Nations language course are not eligible to sit for the language proficiency examinations.

2. A staff member may take a language proficiency examination to obtain a certificate establishing proficiency in a second official language and, in certain cases:

(a) To benefit from the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 2480 B (XXIII) of 21 December 1968;

(b) To qualify for the first or second language allowance under staff rule 103.6.

3. Resolution 2480 B (XXIII) applies to staff members in the Professional and higher categories subject to geographical distribution who work in one of the working languages of the Secretariat and who have an adequate and confirmed

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knowledge of a second official language. The criteria for benefiting from the language incentives provided for under the resolution are set out in administrative instruction ST/AI/207 of 23 December 1971.

4. Under staff rule 103.6, staff members in the General Service and Trades and Crafts categories or in the Field Service category below level 6 are eligible for language allowances. Staff members must be proficient in two official languages and must pass the language proficiency examination in one of them to receive the allowance. To receive a second language allowance they must be proficient in three official languages and must pass the proficiency examination in two of them. Staff members whose mother tongue is an official language of the Organization must pass the examination in another official language, which may be the language in which they are required to be proficient by the terms of their appointment. The language proficiency examination in their mother tongue is waived. Staff members whose mother tongue is not one of the official languages must pass the examination in an official language other than that in which they are required to be proficient by the terms of their appointment. The proficiency examination in that language is waived.

5. Those wishing to take the examination in May 1996 must submit a P.46 application form to the Language Training Programme of the Training Service (room S-606, ext. 3-7056). A separate application must be submitted for each language examination requested. Staff members may register in room S-606 between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. from 29 April to 17 May 1996.

6. Successful candidates must pass BOTH the written and oral parts of the examination with a minimum score of 65 per cent in each part.

7. In certain cases in which candidates receive a score of 80 per cent or more on the written examination but fail the oral, the jury adjudicating the examination will review the cases and may allow candidates to retain their written score for the following examination session, for which they must fill out a new application form. In such cases, candidates will receive written notification of the jury's decision and will have to retake only the oral examination at the following session. The same consideration cannot be given, however, for the oral test or to candidates who have not taken both parts of the examination at the same session.

8. The schedule for the written examination for the May 1996 session is as follows:

28 May 1996

English ..... 9 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

Chinese ..... 2 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.

Russian ..... 2 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.

29 May 1996

French ..... 9 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

Arabic ..... 2 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.

Spanish ..... 2 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.

Candidates are advised to arrive 15 minutes before the start of the examination time in order to allow for check-in procedures.

9. The oral examination will consist of individual 15-minute interviews. Candidates will be given interview appointments at the time of their registration.

10. The number of the conference room in which each examination will be held will be posted in the Secretariat Building on the fourth, fifth and sixth floor bulletin boards and on those in the DC1, DC2, and DC3 buildings. Candidates should check the bulletin boards, as the Training Service cannot send out individual notices for the written examinations.

11. Copies of sample examinations can be obtained in room S-606.

12. Candidates will receive written notification of their examination results by the end of August 1996. No results will be available prior to the official notice.